

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising:

~~the first step of~~ forming a nitrogen-containing oxide film on a substrate as a gate insulating film;

~~the second step of annealing~~ performing a first anneal of said gate insulating film in an atmosphere containing oxygen;

~~the third step of annealing~~ performing a second anneal of said gate insulating film in an ~~oxygen-free~~, inert atmosphere after the first anneal; and

~~the fourth step of~~ forming an electrode film in said gate insulating film which has been annealed twice.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the atmosphere containing oxygen in said ~~second step~~ first anneal consists of a atmosphere of a pressure-reduced oxygen gas or an atmosphere of a mixed gas of oxygen gas and an inert gas.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said ~~third step~~ second anneal is carried out at a temperature ranging from 900°C to 1200°C.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein performing the first anneal further includes controlling oxygen pressure and temperature conditions so as to suppress the gate insulating film from being thickened and nitrogen from being segregated in the gate insulating film.

6. (New) The method according to claim 5, wherein the first anneal is carried out between 6.66×10^2 Pa and 1.33×10^4 Pa.

7. (New) The method according to claim 6, wherein the first anneal is carried out at 900°C to 1000°C.

8. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the inert atmosphere in the second anneal includes oxygen in a concentration of 10 ppb or less.